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EDU 221 Block 2

Reflection Statement

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This experience has been filled with lots of speed bumps, light bulbs, frustrations, stresses, and fortunately, plenty of smiles. Throughout this course, I’ve realized that this whole teaching thing is something you have to take step by step. I have certainly grown as a student, person, and most importantly, as a teacher. I came into this class with the state of mind that I was a student, which was important, but have gradually started to think like a teacher.

When I started this class, one of the most important questions I needed to answer for myself was “Is this really what I want to do”? I was nervous that I would make it through this course and then realize that this was not the thing for me. Although the intensity of learning all of this information that is crucial to the experience was overwhelming, I feel much more comfortable with teaching, and had an absolute blast out in the field actually teaching in my content area. I was certainly quite nervous when I first got out there, but felt right at home just a couple days into it.

I learned in this course that the backward design model is crucial in developing your unit and lessons included within your unit. You need to get your “big ideas” figured out before you try to implement anything and figure out what you want the students to get out of your lessons. Once you have determined your goals for the students, you then need to figure out how you are going to get there and make it actually happen. It is important to figure out how you plan on approaching this and what your methods and techniques are going to be. One key aspect of lesson planning that is extremely important to keep in mind is that YOU are the designer. This is where you can use your creativity and show what kind of style you have. It is always a good idea remember that you can always improve a lesson. Nothing is set in stone, since you are the designer, you can go back and change anything to make it stronger. Another thing that I have learned throughout this experience is that there is no such things as too much feedback or ideas from your classmates. This is something that will carry into teaching, use your colleagues as a tool. It is never a bad idea to get some different opinions. Figure out what works for others, what is more effective for others, and how to use these new ideas.

It is important to use differentiated instruction in the classroom for a few reasons, mostly based on some new theories. First off, the theory of multiple intelligences was definitely drilled into our heads throughout this entire course. Not everyone learns in the same way. You are going to have verbal learners, visual learners, bodily/kinesthetic learners, musical learners, logical learners, naturalistic learners, intrapersonal learners, and interpersonal learners. I know that I have seen all of those in just this one course between myself, my classmates, and the students I have spent time with. When you incorporate these different intelligences into your teaching style, you will be ensuring maximal learning for most of your students.

One other really important idea that I have learned in this course is checking for understanding of the content. You have to make sure the students have an understanding of what has been taught and to not move on until you have checked for that. When students do not understand the content, you should check to see if you have done what you can do to accommodate those students. To check for understanding, it is important to use different types of assessments and provide different options for students to show their understanding in different ways. This relates to the multiple intelligences and that not all students are going to be able to take a test to show their understanding. We learned in this course to incorporate Type II Technologies which will really connect with students today. When you give students the opportunity to show their understanding through an iMovie, podcast, Wiki page, etc, they are going to more engaged and hopefully will be able to show what they know in a creative way.

I certainly still feel that teaching is going to be a challenge, but I never said I was not up for challenges. This course has been very demanding and I feel that this is just a small preview of how things will be as a teacher. You are going to be working hard and changing things around each day to figure out what works best for your students. After all, it is your job to make sure the students are getting the most out of your teaching.

As for a grade in this class, I would have to say that I feel I deserve a B+ or A-. I completed the assignments for the course and have shown improvement from the beginning. I feel that I have grasped the idea of backward design in lesson planning and learned a lot of about Type II technologies. I cannot say that I am an expert because this was all new to me, but I certainly think I have the main idea behind it all. Most importantly, I think that I have definitely began making that transition from the student mind set to the teacher mind set. I would not say that I have completely crossed over, but that I am well on my way.